OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PARISH OF ORLEANS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

December 6, 1967

STATEMENT OF: HERBERT R. WAGNER, JR. - Age: 43 Years
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Vice President of the St. Charles Parish
Credit Bureau

I probably got to know DAVE FERRIE at the New Orleans Airport where I have owned several airplanes. I owned these airplanes from 1946 on. Sometime between 1946 and 1956 I definitely got to know him because in 1952 when we opened the Kenner Finance Company, I remember making direct loans to DAVE at that time. I got to know the man, he was a very interesting man to listen to. I used to just sit down when I had time and just talk to him. We did become friends. It was not just a business relationship. He even came to my house and visited us. DAVE was always tinkering with something and he had no tools and he was always borrowing something. He borrowed to the point of almost being a nuisance. I believe that FERRIE probably considered me one of his personal friends because he would take me into his confidence on financial problems and personal problems he had.

In about 1958-59 he came to me with some kind of hare-brained idea he had. He was going to Central or South America on some kind of treasure hunt or something. He always had wild plans like this outside the United States.

On June 14, 1961, he came into my office and introduced me to SERGIO ARCACHA and he told me that Mr. ARCACHA was a government agent and that the government checks were delayed and that he was needing a loan and FERRIE would be willing to guarantee or endorse this loan for ARCACHA. In the process of taking the application, it showed that ARCACHA was a New Orleans delegate for the Cuban Revolutionary Front and that his previous employment was with the Diplomatic Corps of the Cuban government for ten years. At the time ARCACHA made this loan which was for $338.82, he gave the following references, namely:

1. A CPT. VON MAYER who lived at 6942 Canal Boulevard, as a personal friend.

2. A RICHARD ST. PE, living at 6971 Louis XIV Street, as a friend.

3. A MRS. NAOMI MARSHALL, 408 Camp Street, as a personal friend.

This is the only loan ARCACHA made with me. At that time I did see a United States government Diplomatic I.D. card with his picture and so forth on it. I verified his employment by calling

JAckson 5-8508. This loan became very troublesome in collection and it became necessary for us to continuously try to contact Mr. ARCACHA to collect it.

ARCACHA came into the office of my company, the Herb Wagner Finance Service, on several occasions with other Cubans, also, with DAVID FERRIE, ARCACHA and Cubans.

One day at my company DAVE called me one afternoon and asked me if he could meet me at my office after working hours as he had something very important to talk to me about. When ARCACHA and FERRIE came in, we sat down and we talked for a while and he told me, "HERB, you can be real valuable to us." FERRIE looked at me and said, "Did you ever hear of "Operation.." And he stopped and looked at ARCACHA and ARCACHA shook his head in an affirmative manner and then FERRIE said, "Operation Mosquito?" I made some little funny remark about so many mosquitos in the area and he said, "No, HERB, with your knowledge of motors, you could be helpful to us." Of course, he then went on to explain to me that they were planning a sabotage campaign to Cuba to sabotage machinery and transportation and so forth, in Cuba. I stopped him at that time and said, "Whoa, you've got the wrong man." I went on talking to DAVE as a friend and said I was married and have responsibilities and could not become involved in it. He said that we have to train other people to do this. "Could you give us a hand in that direction?" I told him, "DAVE, I would rather have nothing to do with it. If you have a fund raising campaign or something I can help you with, I will go along in that direction gladly." DAVE then contacted me several days later and asked me, "HERB, did you give it any more thought?" And I told him, "DAVE, I just borrowed a hell of a lot of money to open this business up and I can't fool with this kind of stuff. I have to make every minute count." And he told me, "If money is the only thing keeping you from this, well, hell, we can get money."

A few days later, DAVE called me and said, "HERB, do you want to fly with me to Miami?" I said, "Hell, no, what the hell are you doing in Miami?" He said something and I said, "Do you mean to tell me you're flying to Cuba?" He said, "No, let's say we are taking airplane rides." I told him, "DAVE, you must be some kind of a nut. You know the government's got radar everywhere. How in the heck are you going to Cuba?" And he said, "The government knows what we're doing. As a matter of fact, they're backing us."

He called me on another occasion later on and he came on real friendly this time. He said, "HERB, have you been getting any flying in lately?" I told him I couldn't afford to fly. And he said, "You're a damn fool. With what you know about navigation and flying, you can make money." I told him, "How in the hell can you make money, DAVE. Just tell me that." And he said, "We're taking people in and out of Cuba at nighttime." I didn't want any part of it.

The [illegible] thing I can recall, DAVE opened a service station called DAV[illegible] Gulf Service, 2316 Veterans Highway, Metairie. I have a business card with AL BEAUBOUEF and DAVE FERRIE's names on it which you have a copy of.

On one occasion I went to the service station and DAVE used to call me "VON WAGNER". And he called out and said, "VON WAGNER, you square-headed German, come back here, I want you to help me." I went back to the station where DAVE was at. He had two rifles and he was attempting to mount scopes on them. I don't know what kind of rifles they were. He asked me if I would assist him in mounting the scopes with them and I told him that this was work for a gunsmith. And he said, "Hell, anybody can do it. Any machinist can do it." And he got kind of peeved at me. There were several other people back there with him but I didn't get a good look at them. I told him, "DAVE, all you're going to do is mess up a good gun" and I went back out to my car. DAVE did not say why he was trying to put scopes on these two rifles and I didn't ask.

Q. Do you remember if AL BEAUBOUEF was present at that time?

A. I cannot remember.

On another occasion, I went to the service station and DAVE and a bunch of teenagers were there and they were tearing apart DAVE's plane. I asked him "What are you doing to your airplane" and he said, "I'm going to rebuild it." The airplane stayed there for some time disassembled and then it disappeared.

Q. Mr. WAGNER, previously you mentioned that you read in the Warren Report or in a magazine, that FERRIE's plane was not in flying condition at the time of the President's assassination and further, you related to me that you know for a fact that his plane was in flying condition. Is this correct?

A. I read somewhere, I believe it was a newspaper, that FERRIE's plane was not in flying condition but then I recalled of going to the New Orleans Airport with DAVE FERRIE making a collateral appraisal on the airplane for the purpose of making a loan and I asked DAVE at that time -- the airplane looked raggedy -- I said, "Does this plane have an Air Worthiness Certificate?" He said it did. It did not look like it would even run. He opened the cabin door and jumped in it and before I could say anything he started the engine. He said, "Come on. Take a ride." I got in the plane and we flew over New Orleans and Metairie and so forth. From outside appearances I can see how anyone would think it would not be flyable. I obtained from FERRIE the following information on his airplane to make the loan he requested:

1948 Stinson - 108-2 - S/N 108-1293
Franklin engine #12974
N. Federal Registration (FAA Department of Commerce) # N8293K
White and Blue
Value at the time - About $3,000 (this amount was kind of high).

When DAVE became involved in a crime against nature charge in Jefferson Parish, I was a character witness for him. He also had a priest from Loyola, several nuns showed up but they were not brought in, GUY BANISTER showed up and many other people I didn't [illegible] remember talking to BANISTER personally and I [illegible] personally.

Q. Were you a member of the CAP?

A. No, DAVE asked me several times to join it and had it been a regular adult CAP, I would have joined it but from my experience around the Airport it was just a glorified Boy Scout Troop, just kids.

Q. Did you know LAYTON MARTENS?

A. Yes, I did. I met him through DAVE FERRIE, where I don't know. MARTENS also appeared at the trial with FERRIE as a character witness.

Q. I showed you a picture of CLAY SHAW. Can you recall if you have ever seen this man or ever heard the name of CLAY BERTRAND?

A. There was a big fellow who walked with a very slight limp or a lope -- he was not crippled or anything -- who used to go around DAVE's service station but I cannot say that this man is the same in the picture that you have shown me of CLAY SHAW. I cannot remember anything else about this man.

Q. Did you know LEE HARVEY OSWALD?

A. No.

Q. Do you think that you could recognize any of the Cuban people that you have seen in company with FERRIE or SERGIO ARCACHA SMITH?

A. Through the Cuban type people that you have shown me pictures of, I can't recognize any of them and I think that Cubans all look alike.

Q. It should be noted that Mr. WAGNER was shown all the pictures in our mug file on subjects connected with this investigation. The only ones he could identify were GUY BANISTER, LAYTON MARTENS, AL BEAUBOUEF, DAVE FERRIE and SERGIO ARCACHA SMITH.

Let me tell you this, five times since the assassination my house has been ransacked and nothing taken. Four different times my office has been ransacked and nothing taken. One time my camp on Blind River was ransacked and nothing taken. These can all be verified by police reports.

Something else I remember is that when FERRIE had the service station, he asked me if I would like to go across the Lake with him for a weekend to tell people or show people how to damage engines.

HERBERT R. WAGNER, JR.

KENT A. SIMMS, Investigator
(Witness)